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MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY AT THE BORDERS

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The Economics of Crime – Fundamental Concepts Part 2

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The Economics of Crime: Fundamental Concepts

In the context of international conventions and legislation, it is essential to understand the definition of a criminal group, as defined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, also known as the Palermo Convention, and its three protocols. This definition highlights the underlying structure of the organized criminal group, as outlined in article 2 of the convention.

An organized criminal group is characterized as **a structured group of at least three individuals that exists for some time and operates in a coordinated manner with the aim of committing one or more serious offenses, aiming to obtain economic benefits or other material gains, directly or indirectly**. Serious offenses refer to acts that are punishable by a prison sentence of at least four years or more.

The Economics of Crime: Fundamental Concepts

The definition presented in the Palermo Convention provides a solid basis for understanding criminal groups and their main components. They tend to present **coordination structures**, which can take different forms, including diffuse and fluid networks. Furthermore, they operate based on a **rational calculation of risk** and gain in illicit markets and seek to **obtain illicit advantages** of an economic or privilege nature. These groups also have the ability to **act at a supranational level**, transcending state borders.

These four components provide a comprehensive understanding of criminal groups and serve as the basis for a theory that considers them as a set of agents seeking to maximize their gains in a global market.

The Economics of Crime: Fundamental Concepts

In the context of the Americas, countries are committed to classifying organized crime in their domestic laws and promoting international cooperation to fight this phenomenon. This was ratified in the 2003 Declaration on Security in the Americas, in which the Organization of American States (OAS) urges member countries to comply with obligations under the Palermo Convention and its protocols, especially criminalizing money laundering, human trafficking, corruption and related crimes.

To face these threats, the OAS launched the Hemispheric Plan of Action against Transnational Organized Crime in 2006, promoting the prevention and combat of these crimes with full respect for human rights, based on the Palermo Convention and its protocols.

The Economics of Crime: Fundamental Concepts

In the specific area of firearms, human and drugs trafficking, the region has adopted pioneering measures, such as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms of 1997 and the Arms Trade Treaty of 2014. Furthermore , the region has also been committed to fight human trafficking, adopting the United Nations Protocol and specific work plans.

Regarding cybersecurity, the region has implemented the Comprehensive Inter-American Strategy to Combat Threats to Cybersecurity, which aims to build capabilities, develop national strategies and create alert and prevention groups to face cyber challenges.

It is essential that security professionals are aware of this international legal framework and the measures adopted in the Americas region to fight organized crime and other security threats, in order to prevent and control these phenomena effectively.

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